

CLAIMS

1. A power control method for an appliance (1) which outputs a video signal for display on a television set (2), the appliance having an ON power mode and a STAND BY power mode and being in communication with the television set, the method comprising;

5 monitoring a parameter of an operating signal associated with the television set (2);

10 comparing the value of the parameter with predetermined values at which the appliance is desired to be either operative (ON power mode) or inoperative (STAND BY power mode); and,

15 evaluating, when a predetermined value of the parameter is detected, the current power mode of the appliance (1) and if this is not the desired power mode, initiating a change in operation of the appliance (1) from its current power mode to the desired power mode.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the operating signal is the electricity supply to the TV set (2).

20 3. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the parameter is the current of the electricity supply.

25 4. A method as claimed in claim 3 wherein a predetermined value corresponds to a minimum above which the TV set is known to be switched on.

5. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the operating signal is the TV signal displayed on the TV set and the parameter is the frequency at which the signal is received.

6. A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein a predetermined value is the frequency or frequency band at which the appliance receives services from the service provider whose broadcasts the appliance is configured to receive.

5 7. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the operating signal is the oscillator/mixer signal of the television set and the predetermined value is the frequency or frequency band of the oscillator/mixer signal.

10 8. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the operating signal is the line scan of images displayed by the TV set and the predetermined value is the presence or absence of a line scan.

15 9. A method as claimed in claim 8 wherein the line scan incorporates a signature unique to a broadcast service provider whose services are received through the appliance.

10. A method as claimed in claim 8 wherein the line scan incorporates a signature unique to the appliance.

20 11. A method as claimed in claim 9 or 10 wherein the predetermined value is the presence or absence of the signature.

12. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the predetermined value is adaptive.

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13. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the appliance is a set top box (STB), a DVD player, a VCR or a games console.

30 14. A power control apparatus for an appliance (1) which outputs a video signal for display on a television set (2), the appliance (1) having an ON

power mode and a STAND BY power mode and being in communication with the television set (2), the apparatus comprising;

means for monitoring a parameter of an operating signal associated with the television set;

5 means for comparing the value of the parameter with predetermined values at which the appliance is desired to be either operative (ON power mode) or inoperative (STAND BY power mode);

and means for evaluating, when a predetermined value of the parameter is detected, the current power mode of the appliance, and if this is
10 not the desired power mode, initiating a change in operation of the appliance from its current power mode to the desired power mode.

15. A power control apparatus as claimed in claim 14 wherein the operating signal is the electricity supply to the TV set.

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16. A power control apparatus as claimed in claim 15 further comprising an electrical socket (3) configured to receive the power plug (4) of the TV set (2), the socket (3) being electrically connectable to a mains electricity supply and including means (23, 24; 26, 27) for sensing changes in
20 one or more characteristic parameters of the electricity supply passing through the socket and means for communicating the sensed changes to the control apparatus.

25 17. A power control apparatus as claimed in claim 14 wherein the operating signal is the TV signal displayed on the TV set and the parameter is the frequency at which the oscillator/mixer of the TV is operating, the apparatus further comprising means (42) for monitoring the frequency or frequency band to which the oscillator/mixer of the television set is tuned.

30 18. A power control apparatus as claimed in claim 17 wherein the monitoring means comprises an RF cable (36) coupling the appliance to the television set.

19. A power control apparatus as claimed in claim 14 wherein the operating signal is the line scan of images displayed by the TV set and the apparatus comprises means for monitoring the line scan.

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20. A power control apparatus as claimed in claim 17 or 19 wherein the monitoring means comprises an antenna (40, 55) within the appliance.

10 21. A power control apparatus as claimed in claim 19 which is arranged to cause the appliance to incorporate a signature in the scan rate of the video signal which can be monitored by the apparatus.

22. A computer program for causing a power control apparatus to perform the method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 13.

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23. An appliance comprising an output for outputting a video signal for display on a television set and a power control apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 14 to 21 or a computer program as claimed in claim 22.

20 24. An appliance as claimed in claim 23 in the form of a set top box (STB), a DVD player, a VCR or a games console.